

## Coordinated Entry Toolkit

Coordinated entry is an important process through which people experiencing homelessness can access the crisis response system in a streamlined way, have their strengths and needs quickly assessed, and quickly connect to appropriate, tailored housing and mainstream services within the community or designated region. Standardized assessment tools and practices used within local coordinated assessment processes take into account the unique needs of children and their families as well as youth. When possible, the assessment provides the ability for households to gain access to the best options to address their needs, incorporating participants' choice, rather than being evaluated for a single program within the system. The most intensive interventions are prioritized for those with the highest needs.

HUD requires that Continuum of Care establish and operate a coordinated entry system. HUD also requires that any projects funded under the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program or the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program participate in the coordinated entry system. Ideally, any local organization providing housing and services to households experiencing homelessness, regardless of their funding sources, will participate. Designing a coordinated entry system (CES) that complies with the requirements established by HUD can seem like an overwhelming challenge. The Balance of State (BoS) CoC understands these challenges and seeks to support communities in the transition to a housing crisis response system that ends current homelessness for all households and ensures that future homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring.

### Strategy for Implementing Coordinated Entry

In their *Notice Establishing Additional Requirements for a Continuum of Care Centralized or Coordinated Assessment System*, HUD established a January 2018 deadline for CoCs to implement coordinated entry. The BoS CoC has a strategic plan for meeting this 2018 deadline. As part of this plan, the CoC is currently working with four implementation sites in Bartow, Bibb, Colquitt and Liberty counties to plan their CES. The CoC is relying on other communities to plan for their community's implementation. To help prepare providers to lead this effort, the BoS has released a Coordinated Entry Toolkit. The CoC is working to create a toll-free number for households anywhere in the state to call and be connected to the appropriate CE access point. This will create a front door to the entire system. Once the number is active, it will be distributed to members of the CoC to use. There is a section later in this document that details a timeline and deadlines associated with the implementation of coordinated entry. Providers should make note of these dates and work with other providers in their community to meet the deadlines.

### Regional Planning Groups

Coordinated entry in the BoS will have aspects that are standardized across the 152 counties and aspects that are community specific. Communities should form a coordinated entry Planning Group and meet regularly in an effort to plan and implement their CES. When sensible, communities will organize into a multi-county region. These Planning Groups are responsible for planning and administering coordinated entry within the framework approved by the BoS CoC. Planning Groups will meet to discuss and make decisions about the community specific aspects of their CES. To assist Planning Groups the BoS CoC has provided a Coordinated Entry Toolkit. The toolkit consists of the following documents:

- VI-SPDAT Triage Tool
- Coordinated Entry Written Standards
- Coordinated Entry Regional Planning Guide
- Diversion and Prevention Screening Tool
- Coordinated Entry Core Elements
- Coordinated Entry Self-Assessment
- Notice Establishing Additional Requirements for a Continuum of Care Centralized or Coordinated Assessment System

### Screening and Assessment Tools

The same assessment tool will be used across the BoS CoC's 152 counties to provide standardization. The assessment tool is divided into two parts:

1. Diversion and Prevention Screening Tool- Prevention assistance helps households maintain current housing situations; shelter diversion assists with options to find housing outside of shelter while receiving services to stabilize housing or move into permanent housing. These strategies will reduce the number of people entering the system, reducing the demand for shelter.
2. VI-SPDAT-The VI-SPDAT is administered to households who are in need of permanent housing. The tool will be used to assist in determining the appropriate level of service and intervention for people in the system. This tool assists in determining who is in greatest need of assistance.

### Balance of State Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry Written Standards

The BoS CoC Coordinated Entry Written Standards were approved by the CoC Board on June 20, 2017. The Written Standards is the governing document for Coordinated Entry across the Balance of State. Each community must build their coordinated entry system to follow all standards set forth in the Written Standards.

### Coordinated Entry Planning Guide

The BoS CoC Coordinated Entry Planning Guide is the template CE planning groups will use to create their community's plan for implementing a CES. The tool guides users through the community level decisions. This tool also serves as the template communities will use to submit their Coordinated Entry Plan to the CoC.

### HUD Coordinated Entry Documents

The following HUD documents are very valuable tools to use when planning your community's CES.

1. Coordinated Entry Core Elements
2. Coordinated Entry Self-Assessment
3. Notice Establishing Additional Requirements for a Continuum of Care Centralized or Coordinated Assessment System

### HMIS

The BoS CoC is working to build the Coordinated Entry workflow in Client Track. Communities are required to track data associated with Coordinated Entry in Client Track. All CES access points must be using HMIS to input client data, host a prioritization list, and to make referrals within the system. All parts of the CES will take place in HMIS. The CoC will provide CES HMIS updates as appropriate.

### Timeline and Due Dates

- **September 15**- Planning Groups must submit first part of the Planning Guide (Names of members of the planning group, planning group lead, counties served, CE lead)
- **November 15**- Completed Coordinated Entry Plans submitted to CoC office for comments. Use Coordinated Entry Planning Guide as a template
- **December 2017**- Coordinated Entry Plans returned to Planning Groups with comments
- **January 2018**- Coordinated Entry implementation across the Balance of State